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Drivers Beware: Ambrose-Searles Move Over Act to Begin January 1st, 2011

Albany, NY – December 15, 2010 - New York State Police Acting Superintendent John P. Melville joined with State Fire Administrator Floyd A. Madison, Acting DOT Commissioner Stanley Gee, Thruway Authority Executive Director Michael R. Fleischer, and DMV Commissioner David J. Swarts in urging motorists to move over and slow down when encountering emergency vehicles New York's roads and highways. Governor Paterson signed the Ambrose-Searles 'Move Over Act' into law last summer, and the move over and slow down provisions of the law take effect January 1, 2011.

Governor David A. Paterson said, "This law will work to safeguard the emergency personnel who protect us day and night as we travel. The 'Ambrose-Searles Act' is a common sense approach that will work to prevent avoidable collisions with emergency personnel, and I was pleased to sign it into law last summer."

The Ambrose-Searles 'Move Over Act' requires drivers to exercise due care to avoid colliding with an authorized emergency vehicle which is parked, stopped or standing on the shoulder of a road or highway with its emergency lights activated. Drivers must reduce speed on all roads when encountering such vehicles, but on parkways, interstates, and other controlled access highways with multiple lanes, drivers are further required to move from the lane immediately adjacent to the emergency vehicle, unless traffic or other hazards exist to prevent doing so safely.

"The highway is one of the most dangerous environments faced by law enforcement," Superintendent Melville said today. "Unfortunately, too many motorists either ignore or fail to perceive the dangers associated with driving too close to emergency vehicles that are stopped on the side of the road. We hope that by informing the public of this new law and vigorously enforcing its provisions, we will be able to improve safety for emergency professionals who work in these hazardous conditions."

"The motoring public's compliance with the 'Move Over Act' will help to assure the safety of first responders throughout the state," said State Fire Administrator Floyd A. Madison. "The men and women in the Fire Service urge motorists to move over and slow down when they see an emergency vehicle with its lights activated."

"The New York State Department of Transportation urges motorists to slow down and move over for emergency vehicles under the new Ambrose-Searles 'Move Over Act' to help assure safety on our roadways," said State Department of Transportation Acting Commissioner Stanley Gee.

“This legislation will help prevent secondary accidents involving emergency workers. Motorists should be aware of any workers along the side of the road, and drivers should give a wide berth to police and emergency responders.”

“Moving over for emergency vehicles will help speed emergency response and provide additional measure of safety for emergency responders,” said Executive Director Michael R. Fleischer. “Thruway’s dedicated State Police Troop T members will be vigilant enforcing this new law on the Thruway as well as the state’s other traffic safety measures.”

“Emergency response personnel put their lives on the line every day while protecting the public on our highways,” said New York State Department of Motor Vehicle Commissioner David J. Swarts. “The Ambrose-Searles Act is a sensible and practical law to help ensure that our state’s hard-working emergency responders can perform their duties out of harm’s way.”

The Ambrose-Searles ‘Move Over Act,’ is named in honor of New York State Trooper Robert W. Ambrose and Onondaga County Sheriff Deputy Glenn M. Searles who were both killed in the line of duty while their patrol vehicles were stopped on the side of the road, and to honor others who have tragically lost their lives on the highways while serving the public.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, since 1999, there have been more than one-hundred-sixty (160) law enforcement officers killed in the United States, struck by vehicles while performing police duties along America’s highways. Move over laws have been enacted in most states nationwide in order to prevent these tragedies.

A violation of this law is punishable by a fine of up to \$275, plus mandatory court surcharges. It will also result in two points on the driver’s license record.

NEW YORK STATE LAW:

Ambrose-Searles ‘Move Over Act’

Protects law enforcement officers and emergency workers stopped along roadways while performing their duties.

- Drivers **must** use due care when approaching an emergency vehicle that displays red and/or white emergency lighting.
- On all roads and highways, drivers **must** reduce speed;
- On Parkways and other controlled access highways with multiple lanes, drivers **must** move from the lane immediately adjacent to the emergency vehicle, **unless** traffic or other hazards exist to prevent doing so safely.